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EXDIS, ACTION FOR DRAPER

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, LE, IS, US, XF

SUBJECT: U.S. MNF DEPLOYMENT

1. SECRET--ENTIRE TEXT

2. THIS IS TO CONFIRM SECURE TELECON DISCUSSIONS RE THE REMAINING CONCERNS OVER DEPLOYMENT OF US CONTINGENT OF MNF.

3. ISRAELI PRESENCE AT AIRPORT: WE UNDERSTAND THAT GOL AND PRESIDENT GEMAYEL PERSONALLY ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT UP TO 30 IDF PERSONNEL IN RESTRICTED ENCLAVE AT AIRPORT. WE FURTHER UNDERSTAND THAT LEBANESE ARE IN PROCESS OF TRYING TO ASCERTAIN IF SUCH IDF PRESENCE WOULD FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER RESTRICT COMMERCIAL UTILIZATION OF AIRPORT. CURRENT LEBANESE POSITION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELIS IS THAT ANY ISRAELI OPERATIONAL USE OF AIRPORT WOULD BE HIGHLY RESTRICTED AND ON CASE BY CASE BASIS

SECRET

State Dept. review completed

SECRET

STATE

82 9542160

SSO

PAGE 002

NC 9542160

TOR: 270419ZSEP 82

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY GOL. IN ADDITION, WE UNDERSTAND IT VERY POSSIBLE THAT LEBANON MAY NOT HAVE ALL OF THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS THEY HAVE POSED CONCERNING FEASIBILITY OF COMMERCIAL USE OF AIRPORT. BEGINNING WEDNESDAY SHOULD THERE BE IDF PRESENCE AND EVEN OCCASIONAL USE BY IDF. FINALLY, PRESIDENT GEMAYEL HAS

INFORMED US THAT HE IS VERY ANXIOUS FOR US DEPLOYMENT BY WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 AND THAT HE INTENDS TO USE THIS AS THE CENTRAL FEATURE OF A NATIONAL CELEBRATION MARKING THE RETURN OF BEIRUT TO LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY AND THE START OF A NEW BEGINNING FOR LEBANON. GEMAYEL IS SO ANXIOUS FOR THIS THAT HE URGES WE EFFECT OUR DEPLOYMENT EVEN IF THERE ARE SOME UNANSWERED QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE NATURE AND ROLE OF THE PROPOSED IDF PRESENCE AT THE AIRPORT.

OUR POSITION IS AS FOLLOWS:

-- WE UNDERSTAND THAT US POSITIONS WILL BE TO THE WEST OF THE CONVOY ROUTE WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE GOI AND GOL AND THAT CONVOYS WILL NOT PASS THROUGH MNF POSITIONS. WE PREFER ROUTE BE ADJUSTED EASTWARD, BUT AS LAST RESORT WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONTRACT US POSITIONS TOWARD AIRPORT TO ASSURE IDF STAYS WELL CLEAR OF US POSITIONS AT ALL TIMES.

-- WHATEVER ISRAELI RESIDUAL PRESENCE THERE WILL BE SHOULD BE AS SMALL AS POSSIBLE.

-- THERE IS SERIOUS QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THE ISRAELIS REQUIRE 30 REPEAT 30 PEOPLE. THIS SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED SHARPLY DOWNWARD.

-- YOU SHOULD TAKE POSITION THAT NO WEAPONS ARE NECESSARY FOR STATED PURPOSES OF ISRAELI CONTINGENT. HOWEVER, WE RECOGNIZE THAT YOU MAY HAVE TO FALL BACK TO THE POSITION THAT ISRAELIS MAY HAVE PERSONAL WEAPONS SINCE OUR GUARANTEES DO NOT EXTEND TO THE SAFETY OF INDIVIDUAL ISRAELIS. YOU SHOULD INSIST THAT THERE BE NO REPEAT NO RESIDUAL ISRAELI FIGHTING CAPABILITY SUCH AS THE PRESENCE

SECRET

SECRET

STATE

82 9542160

SSO

PAGE 003

NC 9542160

TOR: 270419ZSEP 82

OF VULCANS.

-- ISRAELI FLIGHTS IN AND OUT OF THE AIRPORT WOULD ONLY BE ALLOWED ON VERY LIMITED BASIS. THERE SHOULD BE NO ISRAELI MILITARY FLIGHTS OTHER THAN IN EMERGENCIES THAT INVOLVE LIFE SAVING SITUATIONS.

-- THE AIRPORT WILL BE THE MAJOR LOGISTICAL BASE FOR THE ENTIRE MNF. THIS WILL REQUIRE A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF OUR MILITARY AIR TRAFFIC ON A CONTINUING BASIS. THEREFORE, IN ADDITION TO ISRAELI-LEBANESE AGREEMENT ON POSSIBLE ISRAELI USE OF AIRPORT, WE INSIST THE LEBANESE CONSULT WITH THE US CONTINGENT ALSO ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS TO ASSURE THAT BOTH US AND GOL APPROVE TIMING AND NATURE OF ISRAELI FLIGHTS.

4. ISRAELIS IN PORT: WE UNDERSTAND THAT PRESIDENT GEMAYEL HAS ACQUIESCED IN ISRAELI PRESENCE AT "ILLEGAL" PORT THAT IS OUTSIDE OF MNF DEPLOYMENT AREA. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ISRAELIS CLAIM THEY NEED SUCH PRESENCE FOR CONTINGENCY PURPOSES RELATED TO POSSIBILITY OF HOSTILITIES FLARING UP AGAIN WITH SYRIA. WE FURTHER UNDERSTAND THAT LEBANESE WOULD INSIST THAT ANY ISRAELI TRANSPORT TRAFFIC FROM PORT TO THE EAST TAKE PLACE UNDER CONDITIONS OF LOWEST POSSIBLE VISIBILITY AND GENERALLY AT NIGHT. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE MORE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE SIZE AND NATURE OF THIS ISRAELI PRESENCE AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION YOU COULD DEVELOP.

5. WE UNDERSTAND THAT YOM KIPPUR GREATLY INTERFERES WITH YOUR ABILITY TO GET US THE KINDS OF REPLIES WE REQUIRE FOR MAKING EARLY FINAL DECISIONS RE TIMING OF DEPLOYMENT OF US CONTINGENT OF MNF. WE KNOW YOU SHARE OUR SENSE OF GREAT URGENCY IN THIS MATTER. IN ADDITION TO SPECIFIC ANSWERS WHICH WE REQUIRE, PARTICULARLY AS CONCERNS AIRPORT WHERE MNF WILL BE PHYSICALLY DEPLOYED, WE NEED YOUR EARLIEST VIEWS ON EFFECTS OF DELAYS OF US DEPLOYMENT, MOST PARTICULARLY ON AMIN'S PROPOSALS FOR A NATIONAL CELEBRATION ON WEDNESDAY. IS THIS SOMETHING THAT IS ALL LOCKED IN OR CAN IT BE SLIPPED A DAY?

SECRET

SECRET

STATE

82 9542160 SSO

PAGE 004

NC 9542160

TOR: 270419ZSEP 82

6. IT MUST BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT ANY RESIDUAL
ISRAELI PRESENCE IN EITHER THE PORT OR THE AIRPORT WOULD
BE TEMPORARY ONLY WITH EXPECTATION THAT IT WOULD BE
WITHDRAWN IN PHASE II. DAM

END OF MESSAGE

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